

THE FRANCHOT PLEDGES: A BOLD VISION FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

4. Improve Educational Outcomes for All Marylanders

Our education system can be one of our greatest tools for leveling the socio-economic playing field and equipping every Marylander, irrespective of zip code, with the tools they need to live a fulfilling, secure life. Unfortunately, Maryland's students experience significantly different outcomes from our education system for a number of reasons:

- The joy of teaching has been stripped from our teachers as they are not sufficiently empowered in the classroom and are undercut by unhelpful bureaucracy and excessive standardized testing.
- High school graduation does not sufficiently provide connectivity to vocational training or college opportunity, and the high school curriculum lacks the appropriate focus on certain real-world skills like financial literacy.
- Money and the prospect of debt are significant barriers to higher education.
- Maryland's school facilities offer dramatically variable physical infrastructure, including undrinkable water, classrooms without climate control, and mold.



Franchot will augment Maryland's education system to provide a more comprehensive, fully-resourced model that equips students with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence they need to thrive in the modern economy. This effort will include piloting innovative approaches to equipping high school students with real-world skills, such as a case-based curriculum that centers learning on financial literacy and other practical skills necessary for the modern economy. Franchot will seek other immediate improvements like reducing standardized testing, allowing collective bargaining on classroom size, and pushing for fully elected local school boards. Moreover, Franchot will ensure no school building suffers from mold, undrinkable water, or classrooms without climate control.

Of course, the achievement gap has already begun by the time students reach pre-K, let alone kindergarten. In concert with his senior mentorship program, Franchot will pilot an intergenerational child care program, utilizing Maryland's seniors in the programming and oversight.

Franchot's agenda includes piloting fully debt-free paths to a vocation or college degree. In partnership with employers and unions, the Franchot administration will integrate union vocational training and apprenticeship programs into Maryland's public high school system. Further, Franchot will pilot student loan debt forgiveness for students who live, work, and pay taxes in Maryland for at least five years after graduation. This program is intended not only to expand access to higher education and freedom from student debt for participating Marylanders, but to serve as a draw for new Maryland residents who seek to utilize the program. Franchot will also pilot a student debt forgiveness program for students who did not attend college in Maryland, but who are willing to come to Maryland to live, work, and pay taxes upon college graduation. By combatting the student debt crisis, Maryland can create a draw for new residents and a dynamic talent pool for employers that attracts new businesses.

In order to provide truly comprehensive connectivity with career and remove barriers to opportunity for those who may not pursue a four-year degree, Franchot will offer the same opportunity for those graduating from Maryland's community colleges.